

Femmes D'Esprit



CNR Honors Magazine
Spring 2009

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations to everyone on a successful completion of the semester! It always feels like someone or other comments on how quick the time flies, but it is almost inconceivable to me that three months have passed so soon. I am sure each of you feel the same way, and, if you could, would petition for an extra week or so for those final papers. I would be right beside you, but for more selfish reasons.

My impending doom (i.e. Commencement) has caused me to reflect upon my time here at CNR and in the Honors Program. Mostly, it is an exercise in mourning the loss of my friends and in envying the subsequent classes for the amazing courses that were never offered when I was here.

I think my feelings are a mixture of sadness at ending what has been an amazing chapter in my life and excitement at finally being able to forge my own path in the world. There is a little bit of fear there, but that mostly arises from a simple observation I have made: there are no television shows based on college graduates.

Pregnant high school teens: check. Elite preppy rich private school teens: check. Group of interning/practicing medical professionals: check. Vampire-slaying high schoolers: check. Group of five middle-aged friends who are there for each other: check. High schoolers in a boat not waiting for their lives to be over: check. All the good shows are about high school when nobody knows anything, or after you know everything and are having that mid-life crisis.

Where is the sitcom about the Baccalaureate student as she stumbles through college, or the Philosophy grad student who makes frenemies behind the closed doors of academia? We are seriously in territory that popular television will not

even breach.

All of this combined makes me a little nervous about what twists I can expect from the next couple of years. Whatever happens, though, I know that the experiences and knowledge I have gained here will no doubt make me smile more and, hopefully, get a job in less than nine months.

In all seriousness, though, I am neither envious (OK, maybe a little) or bone-chillingly afraid. I am, however, *très triste* that I will never walk up into the Castle again, or sit in one room with only my Honors cohort, laughing at some funny we've made. Many focus on Honors as an intellectual experience, and rightly so, but I found it to be one that furnished me with life lessons as much as academic ones. Thank you, Dr. Bass, for all of your advisement and help; I will definitely come back to audit your "Welcome to the World 101" class!

Even if our experiences are not sitcom-worthy, I will think on them with pride and happiness for the years to come. Good luck to the rest of you on your journey, and a million thanks to the Senior Class of 2009—we rock!

Sincerely,

Erin Daley, Editor

ABOUT THE COVER



This is a mixed media drawing (using both pastels and watercolor paints) that was done from memory of a photograph I had taken. My high school was located in Long Island City, a few blocks away from a sculpture park with a waterfront view of the NYC skyline. What I remembered most was the reflection of the city's lights on the water and the tree branches in the foreground, so that is what I focused most on in this piece.

HONORS MATTERS: YOU STILL AREN'T DONE

Dr. Amy Bass, Associate Professor of History, Honors Program Director

So usually I use this space in this issue of *Femmes* every year to get all teary about the departing seniors, lauding them for their achievements and giving them likely useless advice for their futures. This time? Perhaps not so useless.

The College of New Rochelle, as has been drilled into your heads from your earliest days of orientation, and further drilled in your time in the Honors Program, is a liberal arts college. How we define this, how you define this, and how the world defines this is, as always, up for debate. A liberal arts curriculum is an amorphous and wonderful creature. As an approach to higher learning, we often describe it by what it isn't: it isn't professional or technical or vocational training, per se; it is a curricula that refuses to lay emphasis on any one specialty, but rather seeks to develop and hone your abilities to engage in rational thought, analysis, and expression. In the 5th century, Martianus Minneus Felix Capella, a pagan thinker, wrote a book entitled *Satyricon* that defined the liberal arts as grammar, rhetoric, geometry, dialectic, astronomy, arithmetic, and music. We define them a bit differently here at CNR, but you get the gist. It's about general education – about learning from a whole perspective.

That said, each of you graduates with at least one major, an area of specialization that has formed a theme for the crux of your four years here. So my parting words to you? Be wary of your major as you make your way further into the world.

Perhaps your double major in biology and chemistry enabled you to enroll in every science course CNR offers. Maybe your psychology major and women's studies minor filled each semester to the brim, never allowing you to take that painting course you always wanted. I hope you fit in as much as you could, because you never know when you might want to change your mind.

Case in point: Lisa Genova. I went to college, Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, with Lisa. She was one of the few biopsychology majors at Bates, a difficult interdisciplinary science focus that kept its disciples in the lab until the wee hours of every evening. I knew its rigors well; my roommate was also a bio-psych major, and while I toiled away senior year at my computer, pounding out my senior thesis of a hundred pages or so, my roommate would stumble in from lab, her eyes glassy from staring at data all evening.

But Bates is nothing if not a liberal arts institution; it has a required liberal arts core curriculum that makes many a student's head spin. It was a three-tiered core, meaning it was part of every single semester of study for four years. In Lisa's case, thank goodness for that core. Why? Because it provided the foundation for what she ended up doing. Lisa graduated from Bates and went on to graduate school at Harvard, where she received a Ph.D. in neuroscience. She worked in the corporate realm, doing research on the molecular etiology of depression, Parkin-

son's, drug addiction, and the impact of strokes on memory. All very very scientific, I'm sure you'll agree. But then a series of events transpired and Lisa sat down to write a novel about early onset Alzheimer's disease, using her hefty scientific background in a fictional genre.

The result? A little book called *Still Alice*, which has now spent weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, been published in several languages, won several awards,

"Heartbreakingly real. . . . So real, in fact, that it kept me from sleeping for several nights. I couldn't put it down. . . . *Still Alice* is a story that must be told."
—BRENDA BARRY, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Long Road*

STILL ALICE

a novel

LISA GENOVA



and even inspired a handbag line by designer Anna William. She has contracted a second book with her publisher, Simon and Schuster, entitled *Left Neglected*, about a woman afflicted by a rare traumatic brain disorder.

All this from a laboratory scientist?

I had dinner with Lisa several weeks ago following a reading and book signing that she did at Border's at Columbus Circle in the city. "It's a good thing Bates forced you out of the lab every once and a while," I told her, as we laughed about how she – a complete lab rat in college – now toiled away in front of a computer day after day, much as we history majors had done in college. Another friend at the table then commented, "Hey, Bass – maybe your next move will involve the Human Genome Project."

Likely not. But I did take a whole lot of science in college, including a full one-semester immersion program in maritime studies, because the liberal arts required it. So if Lisa can now be a best-selling fiction writer, the lesson for our departing seniors seems clear: just as I might decide to cure the common cold someday, you, too, have the experience to do just about anything you'd like, providing you aren't afraid to simply change your mind and heed your liberal arts lessons.

Good Luck, Class of 2009! And do stay in touch.

INSIGHT INTO "PERSON OF THE FOREST"

Alina Bachmann, '09

For her Senior Show, Alina Bachmann created an art installation in the Mooney Center Gallery. Alina sheds light on her inspiration for her installation and why it is important to both herself and the global community.

From February 28 to March 23, 2009, I had a mixed-media solo exhibition entitled 'Person of the Forest' in the first floor Mooney Center Gallery. Sharing a love for both art and nature, I knew I wanted the focus of my show to encompass an issue concerning the environment. I began my process by researching the world's most pressing issues concerning deforestation and extinction, a subject I have cared deeply about since I was a little girl. I came across several articles concerning "Palm oil," and having never heard anything about the issue previously, I was horrified by what I uncovered and felt the need to raise awareness.

Palm oil is found in one of every ten household products, from margarine and bread to lipstick and soap, and is consumed by over a billion people across the world. It is also what is driving the orangutan, a species with whom we share roughly 97% of our genes, to extinction. Palm oil plantations are taking over the rainforests of Indonesia and Malaysia, the orangutan's only remaining home, in an effort to meet global demands for the foods and products containing the ingredient. Palm oil can easily be replaced with other forms of vegetable oil but it is not because it is cheap to grow and companies earn a profit from the rainforest timber the plantations replace. By 2012, palm oil is predicted to be the world's most produced, consumed and internationally traded edible oil. Orangutans, currently listed as "critically endangered," are foreseen to be extinct by as early as 2011. Almost 90% of orangutan habitat has now disappeared, and man and the palm oil industry remain the biggest threat to what is left of the orangutan population and their home. Orangutans are one of our closest and most enigmatic cousins. The name 'orangutan' literally means 'Person of the Forest' and was derived from an aboriginal belief that they were humans hiding in the forest to avoid working or becoming a slave.

Now, however, they have become slaves to our consumerism.

I began brainstorming on ways I could translate this issue visually without literally rendering images of rainforest destruction and graphic portraits of dead orangutans that I was seeing within the articles. Eventually, and with a lot of work, I came to what is on display in the Mooney Center Gallery. Using product packaging from household items containing the ingredient 'Palm oil,' I constructed an environment reminiscent of the tree tops of the rainforest to shed light on an issue surrounding one of our closest cousins, the orangutan. Dispersed throughout the tree forms are facts and statistics that inform the viewer of this crisis, how we contribute to it through the items we use daily, and what can be done to prevent the orangutan's predicted extinction and save the remaining forest. The floor-to-ceiling installation brings this issue closer to home and allows the viewer to examine his/her place in the process.



MY EXPERIENCE AT NEXT NEW NETWORKS



I am a BFA Studio Art major with an interest in digital media. I came across a website called Ultra Kawaii. It features video shows of cute pets and funny little animations. It looked like something I would really enjoy being a part of, as it combined my love for animals and art, so I clicked on the "Contact Us" section out of curiosity. The company that is responsible for the website, Next New Networks, is located right in the center of Manhattan. I contacted them about a possible internship, and about a week later went for an interview and got the position.

Next New Networks is a "new media" company. The CEO is former President of Nickelodeon and Director of MTV. Next New Networks is responsible for many online video shows and websites, including the well-known Obama Girl. Their networks range from political satire to several DIY shows to cartoons to, of course, Ultra Kawaii.

My duties as intern were nowhere near the stereotype of making copies and fetching coffee. I was given creative designing tasks, such as redesigning their "Stunt Kitty" page, which is now live on the Ultra Kawaii website. I also made graphics for several of their episodes and you can see my name in the credits. I found all of the cute pet videos and photos for the Laser Pets, Cute Games, Diaper Pets, Doggles, Odd Pet Pairs, Baroo?, Wiggling Out and Halloween Costume Party episodes. Laser Pets, Odd Pet Pairs, Baroo? and Wiggling Out were actually my ideas for episodes and the editors used them. The episodes are available on the Ultra Kawaii website, Myspace, Youtube, Itunes, and many other online places. For fun I made a "Stunt Kitty" felt toy that was recently used in a live-action episode.

Another task that Next New Networks had interns do was to go down to Bryant Park and conduct interviews for a blog called "Shoes Before Food." I interviewed people while another intern filmed; that episode is now live on the blog. That experience really allowed me to break out of my comfort zone and do something I would not have normally done.

Alina Bachmann, '09

In addition to these learning experiences, I also had one really big experience – and I mean big: I was on a huge video billboard in the middle of Times Square. Next New Networks had recorded the footage for the billboard on a day when I was in the office. For the week of NYC's Web 2.0 expo, I was seen waving to the millions of people passing by. The beginning of the ad highlighted their most known shows saying "Our Stars are Huge." It then switched to a clip of everyone in the company waving with the text "OMG We're Huge, too!" Had I not been there, I probably would not have ever gotten that opportunity.

An internship is a fantastic way to get a taste of a field you are considering to pursue. With this experience, I was able to get a sense of designing for a major website, something I had previously done only on my own in a freelance sense throughout high school and between college semesters. I learned about the ins-and-outs of a major networking company and saw just how many people are responsible for a single website. I strengthened my already existing skills in Photoshop, Illustrator and Flash as well as grew as an artist.

You can view a log of my experience at
<http://alinart.blogspot.com>



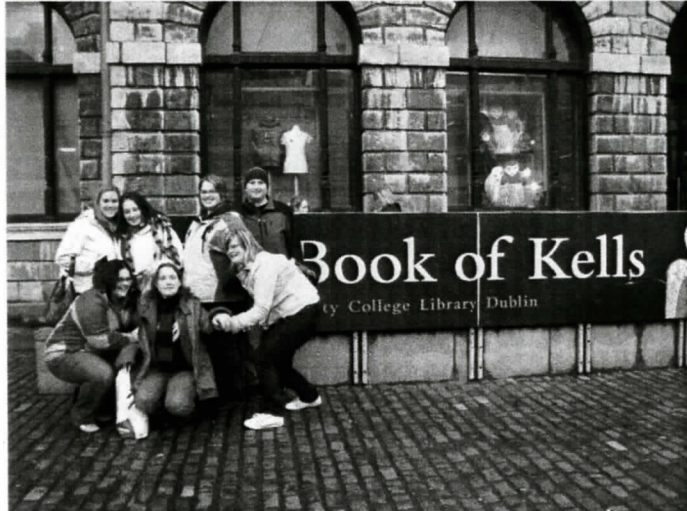
NEVER HAVE I EVER...

Mary Henderson, '11

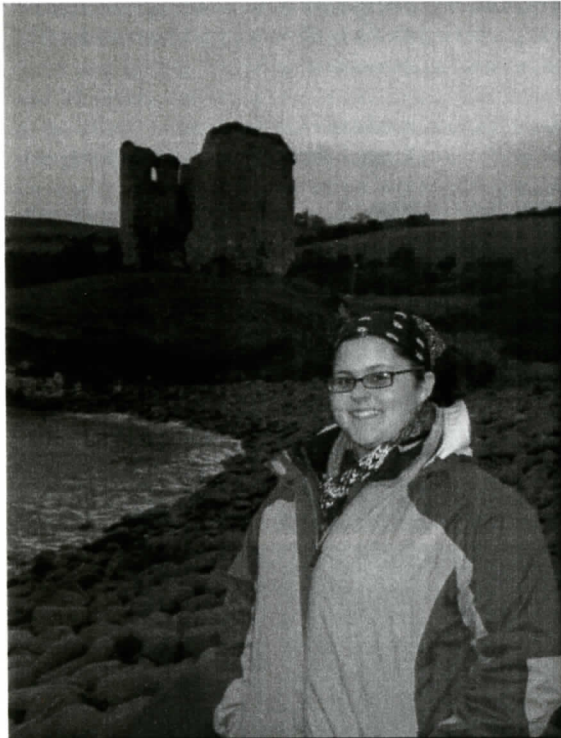
Sophomore Mary Henderson is currently studying abroad in Dingle, Ireland, taking advantage of all the country has to offer. She reflects upon her experiences so far, painting a beautiful portrait of the Emerald Isle's history and culture.

One of the girls I am studying abroad with, Becca, turned to me after a full day in Dublin as we ate crepes at a convenience store. "There is a problem," she said, "with getting to do everything you ever imagined." "What's that?" I asked. "You start to lose the game 'Never Have I Ever' a lot more often."

I shot her an "are you serious?" look, and then we both started to laugh and eat our crepes again, but for some reason this moment seems to have stuck



The SHU Study Abroad group poses in front of the Library at Trinity College in Dublin.



Mary Henderson poses in front of a castle built by the Fitzgerald family in Ireland.

with me. It means more than one might think at first.

I cannot begin to count the times during this trip that I have said the words, "Take a picture, no one back home will believe this!" I have been able to see things up close and personal that were just pretty pictures in text books. I have been able to stand next to standing stones that were carved and placed 4000 years ago that are at least twice my height on a muddy afternoon. Driving to and from locations, you can look out at farmland and start to pick out the standing stones, wedge tombs and round forts. One day on the way to Tralee, I found a half dozen of them and I was



Mary's view from the Lady Altar of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

not even looking that hard. I am surrounded by history, and most people who live here do not even know the extent of it.

Not only have the opportunities to see historical sites and artifacts been great, but I have gotten to do some other things that I would never have done if I had spent the semester at home. If you read my blog, then you already know that one day I conquered my fear of heights by going rock climbing and then jumping off of a platform forty feet in the air and free falling to the ground. I was terrified. I honestly almost did not do it, until I heard Dr. Bass's voice in my head: "You know, I really think you could push your boundaries a little more on this one..." Whether I am crazy or not is debatable, but I sure as hell am glad I listened. Because I overcame this, what is stopping me

next time?

What is a girl to do when she is not standing next to ancient carvings and voluntarily launching herself off a platform 40 feet in the air? She does a lot of thanking. I am so thankful to be here in beautiful Ireland doing things I never in my wildest dreams imagined I would get to do, and seeing things I thought I would never see. I am awed by the opportunities I have received from going abroad, so much so that I am not sure I can accurately put it into words. No where I else could I have gotten the opportunity to see and do all that I have.

My advice to anyone considering a semester abroad is to go for it. This is an amazing thing, and totally worth everything it took to get here. The price paid for seeing everything I ever wanted is small. Besides, I could stand to lose a few more rounds of "Never Have I Ever."



Mary Henderson stands in front of a set of Standing Stones (of which the most famous are those at Stonehenge) aligned with the midsummer sunset, placed 4000 years ago.

WHAT WE HEAR WHEN BOB DYLAN SINGS

Dr. Nick Smart, Associate Professor of English

We've been doing pretty well in our seminar "American Singer-Songwriter," which is devoted to the works of Bob Dylan and some other related sounds and subjects. Like when **Christina Antico** discovered the My Chemical Romance cover of Dylan's "Desolation Row" on the *Watchmen* soundtrack, and brought it into class so we could crank it. Or when **Stephanie Melnick**, who has a very sensitive relationship to folks in the military, understood that "Masters of War" is not a knee-jerk protest song, but a beautiful and angry poem about the service of soldiers and the consequences of violence.

In the class session last week we listened to *Blonde on Blonde*, a record from 1966 on which Dylan is at the height of his poetic powers. We were beginning our investigation of whether Dylan's music rises to the level of art. Here's how it came out:

"Can you turn it up?" asks **Sakina Laksimi**, as the almost torturously slow guitar, drum and harmonica intro to "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" starts to play. Sure, I think. I love turning it up. Also, I think, what is that Bob Dylan song about turning it up? Oh, yeah, "Highlands," where Bob says, I'm listening to Neil Young, I gotta turn up the sound/ Someone's always yelling turn it down." Whether to turn things up or down is not just about the actual eardrum, it's about the intellectual eardrum too. It's about intensity. So, when Sakina asks, I turn it up.

When the song ends we trade observations. **Helen Gilles** finds verses that make

the Sad Eyed Lady seem like a witness to the Holocaust. She's putting courses together, history and contemporary culture turning each other up. I've never heard this interpretation of the song before, but as Helen weaves her thoughts together with Dylan's words it seems absolutely possible. Great art stimulates and elevates your thinking, and asks you to return your thoughts to its form, to amplify and reveal it. That's the connection of art to life, and we are experiencing it with Dylan.

Rachelle LeBlanc likes the end of Sad Eyed Lady, where with "gentleness now that you just can't help but show" the heroine of the song seems to have endured despite the sorrow to which she has borne witness. It's an uplifting take on a potentially tragic song, and everyone seems to appreciate the tone of Rachelle's comment.

Which makes a perfect segue for **Kristen Diaz**, who is also in my British Literature survey, to tell us that she is beginning to really feel the connection between Dylan and Keats. One of the critics we are reading, Christopher Ricks, author of *Dylan's Visions of Sin*, has described the Dylan-Keats axis of genius, but listening to the music and reading the poems makes it really stand out on the "wreath'd trellis" of Kristen's "working brain."

Now we're cooking.

Darianna Parra is on to something. For this session we have also read Friedrich Nietzsche argue, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, that the folksong is "the musical mirror of the world...the original melody, now seeking

for itself a parallel dream phenomenon and expressing it in poetry. And, four weeks into the course, we are all starting to agree that Dylan kind of has it going on. But what about other musical forms and musicians, Darianna wants to know? Is there a hip-hop artist who has the same capacity as Dylan to make the song grasp its epic reach? Yeah, says **Jenell Lenge**, what about the blues? It's a good question. Some of those blues lyrics we heard at the beginning of the semester were really intense, and we know the musical quality of genuine American roots blues is incomparable.

Oh man (ok, woman) we've got ourselves a genuine conversation going on. Dylan opens our eyes to the possibilities of transcendence in our own favorite listening experiences. Later in the seminar students will take over the sound system and play us their own singer-songwriter selections, the music and words that they each find most important. I'm looking forward to that, but Dylan is the standard to which other folksingers must rise. Bob Dylan is a singular experience. His art's resemblance to the blues or the Odes of Keats does not come close to defining him. It is he who defines. To illustrate this we listen to "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again." In this song Dylan talks about being offered "two cures," and the folly of mixing them instead of deciding which was right for him. We ask ourselves, what is the disease for which the singer seeks a cure?

It must be love, observes **Samant**

ha Hamilton, citing the lines about the woman who knows what the singer needs, as opposed to the debutante who just knows what he wants. It's a simple observation, and a heavy one. Considering the difference between desire and need, asking if that's the same thing as the difference between want and purpose, and wondering whether there is a pure form of love alive and juicy within the husk of our confusion, this is important work. This is why we listen to Dylan, and I am grateful to the students who have joined their ears to mine.



SINGER-SONGWRITER'S PERFECT PLAYLIST

20 songs we feel you shouldn't want to live without

1	Love in Vain, Robert Johnson
2	Hard Travelin', Woody Guthrie
3	Song for Woody, Bob Dylan
4	All You Fascists, Woody Guthrie
5	America, Eminem
6	Desolation Row, Bob Dylan
7	I'm Shady, Eminem
8	To Live is to Fly, Townes Van Zandt
9	Masters of War, Bob Dylan
10	True Blue, Bright Eyes
11	Tangled Up In Blue, Bob Dylan
12	Pineola, Lucinda Williams
13	Lua, Bright Eyes
14	Visions of Johanna, Bob Dylan
15	Animal, Ani DiFranco
16	High Water (for Charley Patton), Bob Dylan
17	Cape Canaveral, Conor Oberst
18	Make You Feel My Love, Adele (ok, she's British, but she's a jazz singer and this is a Dylan cover!)
19	We Used to Vacation, Cold War Kids
20	Feel A Change Comin' On, Bob Dylan

REFLECTIONS FROM ANNAPOLIS: NRHC

From March 27-29, three honors students attended the Northeast Regional Honors Conference in Annapolis, MD. Each presented an Honors seminar paper, and here reflect on their individual experiences.

Sarah Hnath, '09 Presented: "Test or Not to Test?" Investigating the Controversies of Genetic Testing for Huntington's Disease" on a panel entitled "Examining Diseases and Disorders"

I never thought I could jam so much into one weekend until I went to the Northeast Regional Honors Conference: culinary adventures, historical explorations, and learning more about what it means to be in an "honors program" from other students' perspectives. Throughout the weekend I met numerous students from places like Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, and my home state of Connecticut. It was a great experience meeting new people and talking about current events, everyone's presentations, about what comprises an "honors program". I must say, learning about other honors programs made me realize how awesome the Honors Program at CNR is! We have so many unique opportunities: getting our capstone projects done our junior year instead of lumping it in with the senior madness; a wide range of seminars from a variety of disciplines (that, by the way, tend to have pretty awesome topics); and the privilege of overpointing without extra charges. I found out that some students at other schools have to pay for over-pointing even though they HAVE to take an honors course every semester! Thank God we don't have that problem!

One of the highlights of the weekend was the location itself: Annapolis is a historically rich and beautiful city. The day we got there, the rain didn't stop the CNR girls from venturing out on the town. We had the opportunity to go visit the State House in Annapolis, a beautiful building that has had so much impact in American history – even George Washington has been there! During the "City as Text" program on Friday, I roamed the historically significant harbor, along with the Maritime Museum, with a group of new friends and learned more about its history and culture, and how it has changed over time.

This was a weekend I will not forget and I am glad to have had the chance to have such a wonderful opportunity to partake in this conference prior to graduation. I learned a great deal about American history, was able to learn about other students' research as well as share my own. I also met some really interesting people, and did I mention I finally was able to use chopsticks thanks to Dr. Bass?! If you haven't gone to an honors conference, my advice to you is take advantage of the opportunity when it comes knocking: you won't regret it!

Erin Daley, '09 , Presented: "The Deluge Myth: woman as the Preserver and Destroyer" on a panel entitled "Contradictions of Womanhood: Educators, Religious Figures, and Literary Symbols"

I really enjoyed my experience in Annapolis at the NRHC. The greatest benefit I derived from this conference was gaining confidence in my work. I think everyone should attend a conference of this sort, whether it is the regional or national one, because it introduces you to making connections and being professional. We met a lot of freshmen who were not presenting anything, but merely wanted the opportunity to see what they were going to do one day. I would still be nervous about speaking publicly about my work if I had not had this experience.

As for the presentation part, I will be quite honest and say that I thought my work would be looked at as not quite professional or well done as others. After attending other panels, however, I now feel a little more confident in my abilities as both a student and as a writer. From this conference experience, I have come to deeply appreciate the training that I have received at CNR as an Honors student.





Alexandria Bignall, '09 Presented: "Reproduction of Resistance: Cyborg Woman in Contemporary Science Fiction" on a panel entitled "Gender, Reproduction, and Body Image"

The National Regional Honors Conference in Annapolis, Maryland was a truly wonderful experience. Firstly, the four-hour drive allowed me to establish a closer, more personal relationship with my Honors classmates, Sarah and Erin, as we listened to a wide range of music and all laughed when I revealed that I'd never seen *The Nightmare Before Christmas*—Sarah and Erin wouldn't let it go. Arriving at the Loews Hotel in, I was nervous because I had never been to an honors conference and I was afraid of meeting new people. However,

I was so happy to learn that the people, not only at the hotel, but the residents of Annapolis, were nice and welcoming. In the hotel, I met some wonderful, intelligent students who made my experience even more exciting.

The night we arrived, Dr. Bass took us to a sushi restaurant. Now, I'd had only a bad experience with sushi so I was skeptical, but willing to try it again. It turned out that the sushi is not that bad. I am now a fan of "Sushi tempura" (I think that's what it was called -- it had shrimp in it) but I refuse to eat a tuna roll ever again! That night I vowed to let go of my fear of trying new foods and try something different whenever I have the chance.



Friday was our "City as Text" outing. My group went on the "Old Town-Historical Intersections of White and Black Lives" tour. We saw the Kunta Kinte-Alex Haley Memorial and the Thurgood-Marshall Memorial. I also visited the Banneker-Douglass Museum, dedicated to the preservation of Maryland's African American heritage. It was a lovely Museum that featured tutorial recordings and videos about the lives of both freed and enslaved people of African descent. The tour, while long and exhausting, was very good. I enjoyed the fact that we were able to go out on our own and walk the city at our own pace.

Saturday was the day of presentations and I was very impressed as I listened to several speeches on very different topics. I remember telling Dr. Bass how nervous I would be to present my project. When I presented my project at Honors Conference Day 2008, I do not believe I was as nervous because I knew practically everyone who attended.



At the NRHC, I was more nervous because I was going to present my topic—an analysis of female cyborgs in science fiction film—to an entirely new audience who did not know who I was or what I was going to present. I kept plaguing myself with questions: would the audience understand? Would they like my presentation? Yet, despite my nerves, I presented my paper and received wonderful, positive feedback. It gave me such a boost of pride that people actually enjoyed, and more importantly *understood*, my presentation. The day ended on a relaxing note: despite the rain, Erin and I went to an ice cream shop where I had THE BEST vanilla sundae.

Overall, I enjoyed my time at the conference. There were a couple of socials that encouraged the students to come together, to laugh, dance and have a good time. I was surprised how quickly the weekend passed. Before I knew it, we were all packing up to head back to New Rochelle. I had a wonderful time and I am appreciative of the hard work that everyone—the teachers, coordinators and students—have put in to make my time there so enjoyable and memorable.

HONORS CONFERENCE DAY 2009

On April 30, 2009, those who completed their Junior Colloquium or other noteworthy accomplishments gathered to showcase their work to the college community.



Dianne Marques, '10: "Hurricane Katrina: International Response and Reaction"

Credit: John Coyne



Jelena Krstic, '10: "Terrorism in the 21st Century"

Credit: Karyn Mooney



Mattie Jalonack, '10: "Invisible Scars: The Unique Effect of 9/11 on a Commuter Town"

Credit: John Coyne

Natasha Reid, '09: "War Crimes & Women"

Credit: Karyn Mooney



Jaclyn Fedolfi, '10 "School Violence"

Credit: Karyn Mooney



Jessica Jahr, '12 & Carol Mathew, '09: "A Week with PLEN"
Credit: Karyn Mooney



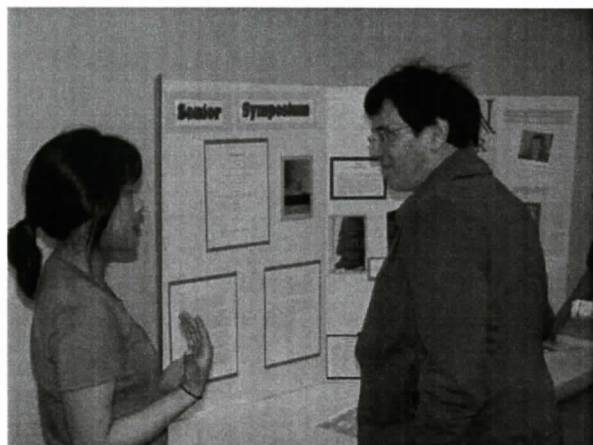
Alina Bachmann, '09: "Person of the Forest"
Credit: Karyn Mooney



Karyn Mooney, '09: "Love's a Lesson Learned"
Credit: Karyn Mooney



Class of 2009: "Senior Symposium"
Credit: John Coyne



Megan Showell, '09: "A Year Abroad . . . in a nut-shell"
Credit: John Coyne



SPA DAY

On Friday, December 12, 2009, the Honors Board organized a Spa Day for all of the Program members. Mary Henderson invited her mother to give professional massages and relax the stress-filled group, while Sarah Hnath led all in some Yoga stretches.



WEST SIDE STORY

Darianna Parra, '11

On Tuesday April 21st, 2009 the Honors Program sponsored a trip to see the revival of the play *West Side Story*, which opened to rave reviews on March 19th, 2009. The lucky students attended two special lectures on the history and importance of the play before viewing this unique spectacle.



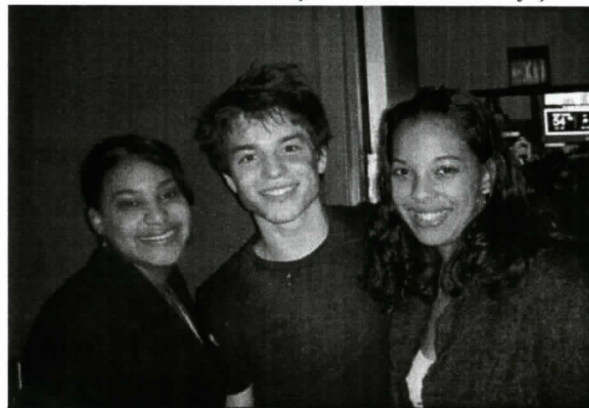
The story of the Jets and the Sharks and that of Tony and Maria's love have held a very special place in the heart of American culture for the past 50 years. Also, having played Maria in my high school production of *West Side Story*, the show holds a very special place in my heart. Imagine my surprise and utter delight when in my inbox I see an email from Dr. Bass stating that interested students will have the opportunity to view not just any show, but one of the world's most recognized plays. A few weeks earlier, I thought how wonderful it would be to be able to see the show and started planning for a time when I would be able to buy tickets (which are definitely not cheap) and watch the show. However, the fates were in my favor (for once!) and gave me the chance through the Honors Program (thanks again!) to see this musical.

As with all things in life, those chosen to see the show had work to do before seeing it. Two seminars were constructed in order to help us have a better understanding of the show's dynamics and subject matter. The first seminar, headed by Laurie Castaldo, focused on the history of the show and in what ways it was so ahead of its time. More than fifty years ago, four musical theater giants, composer Leonard Bernstein, lyricist Stephen Sondheim, choreographer Jerome Robbins and playwright Arthur Laurents joined forces to create *West Side Story*. This show was an unforgettable Broadway snapshot into the very real scene of social tur-

moil in 1950s New York City. A look into this turmoil was the main focus of the second seminar, headed by Dr. Roblyn Rawlins. This seminar let us explore the social backdrop that fueled the story of the play, making it socially relevant.

This show has been around for more than fifty years. What is it that makes this show so special to theatergoers? The popularity of this play lies within the subject matter. The turmoil seen in this play is something that can be seen in today's society. The play has been able to remain a favorite among so many because throughout the years, so many people can still relate to the show. However, there can only be so many revivals before a show becomes too dated.

This show incorporated significant changes. Most notably are two songs, "I Feel Pretty" (*Me Siento Hermosa*) and "A Boy Like That" (*Un Hombre Asi*), which were changed to Spanish. There was also more Spanish for the Sharks and less of a shine on the gangs, which gave them a definite grittier feel. These changes gave a sense of authenticity to the play, as if the audience was seeing actual events unfold. These authentic touches breathed new life into a play that audiences now and in the years to come can enjoy.



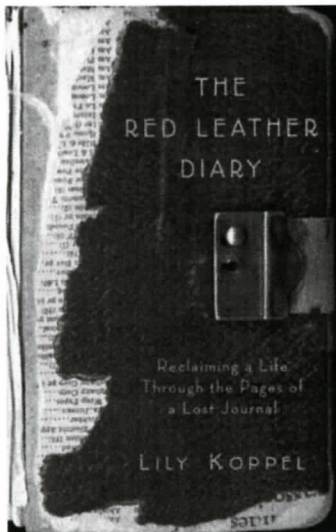
Darianna Parra, '11 and Kristin Diaz, '11 pose with Kyle Coffman, who plays A-Rab, a member of the Jets.

SENIOR LETTER TO THE FRESHWOMEN

To the Honors Class of 2013:

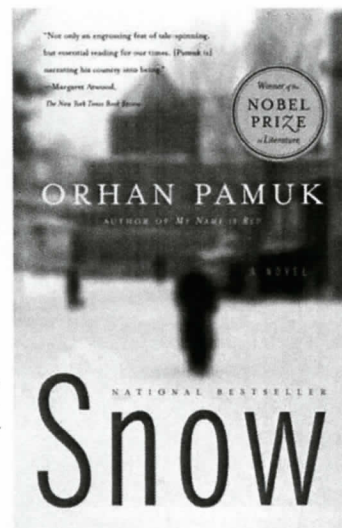
Congratulations and welcome to The College of New Rochelle Honors Program! New beginnings are always a bit rough, but these classes will offer a chance to connect with other women like you. The Honors Program has influenced our lives in many ways, and during our experience in it over the past 4 years, we, the Class of 2009, have matured intellectually into strong and innovative young women. From an academic perspective, we hope that you, too, will continually be introduced to revolutionary ways of thinking and perceiving the world – and the courses offered you through the Honors Program are all expressly designed to further facilitate your intellectual growth in diverse and unique ways.

It is a tradition for the senior class to choose a book for the incoming freshmen of the Honors Program. This book serves to facilitate your transition, a word that you will no doubt be familiar with as you adjust to a new, independent life here at CNR. Drawing from our own experiences with the INS freshmen common read, we recalled how Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* was transformed for us from a dreary monster story into a soul-wrenching novel about selfhood and the



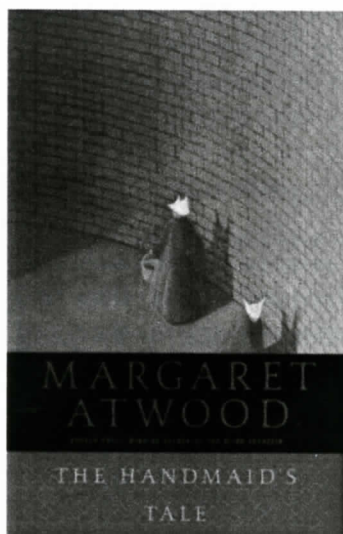
condition of human existence. Accordingly, we developed a framework to assist us in the process of our deliberations, and by the end of the semester, we had selected four potential books: *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *Red Leather Diary* by Lily Koppel. Preliminary voting narrowed the field down to two: *Snow* and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In *Snow*, we found an eloquent and compelling examination of love, happiness, art, life, death, identity, transition – the sort of universal issues that we desired. We additionally found one great asset to be its setting and predominant themes of Islamic political and religious strife, which made it especially pertinent to contemporary global politics. Although Pamuk's *Snow* met many of the requirements of our framework, our class felt that the women characters in the book were not well developed and the story revolved around a male protagonist, with whom many of us could not relate. Accordingly, while it will not be required of you to read *Snow* for this course, we would sincerely encourage you to independently acquaint yourself with Pamuk for your own educational benefit as ambitious college students. In fact, *The Handmaid's Tale* won



by a single vote.

You might be asking yourselves why we chose *The Handmaid's Tale* as the freshwomen read. To begin with, CNR, as a traditionally women's college, has been a place where the importance of higher education for women is promoted. We felt that this book would be a great introduction to the type of women-centered education that you will be receiving. We also liked the manner in which the book addressed the issue of education. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, women are exposed to a very limited education and are oppressively led



to understand their roles as mere wombs and servants. Hopefully, after reading *The Handmaid's Tale*, you will be able to determine for yourself the type of education you are looking for, and perhaps get a better understanding of the women who

came before you.

More than anything else, however, *The Handmaid's Tale* is about the worth, value and power of a woman's voice. The protagonist struggles through an oppressive patriarchal world where the bonds of friendship and love between women have been severed, replaced with duty and obligation. The sole purpose of women is reduced to procreation and our nation, an ideal theocracy. The parallels of the plight of women as merely the means of reproduction in the book can hopefully offer some insight into what women face on a

daily basis in other countries, and even here in the US. *The Handmaid's Tale* reminds us that passive silence is no way to stop oppression or prevent injustices from happening not only in nations all around the world, but on our very doorstep.

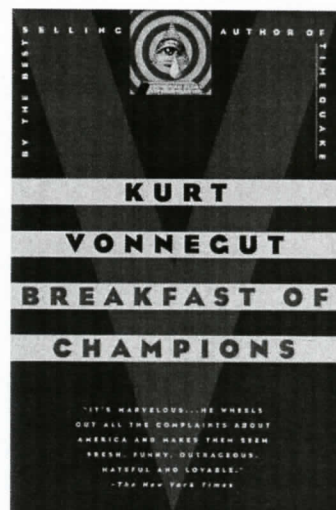
We approached the selection of the book for you with great enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity to give something back to the Honors Program. Please, however, do not feel limited to discuss the book solely in terms of the aforementioned themes; this class begins your college life where you have the freedom to expand your horizons. By all means, use *The Handmaid's Tale* to do just that. While you alone must now make decisions for yourself and your future, the group you are with is one that you will have for all four years of your college life. You have a wonderful opportunity to get to know them, and we hope your relationship will be as ours has been with our cohort. The Honors Program is a challenge, but nevertheless, it is not an impossible quest. Again, congratulations, and good luck!

Sincerely,

The Class of 2009:

Alina Bachmann
Alexandria Bignall
Erin Daley
Sarah Hnath
Jenell Lenge

Carol Mathew
Sherly Mathew
Karyn Mooney
Megan Showell
Jee Hee Yoon



THE CLASS OF 2009: HONORS REFLECTIONS



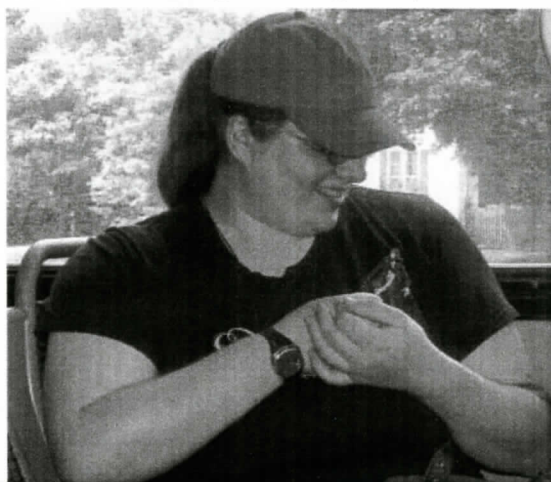
Alina Bachmann (left) waves goodbye with Elissa Gould and a member of her art and Honors "family," Karyn Mooney (right).

The Honors Program has allowed me to meet an intellectual group of people that I might not have otherwise crossed paths with in my journey through CNR. In addition to the "family" I've created with my fellow art majors, I was given the chance to create an additional bond amongst my peers in the Honors Program. This second family consisted of students from various of disciplines and with a variety of interests and perspectives- all of which have allowed me to become more well-rounded individual. The courses within the program exposed me to topics both outside and related to my major, and enhanced my experience here at CNR.

-Alina Bachmann, '09

Okay, I'm not going to cry, I'm NOT going to cry! I will miss all of my Honors Program BFFs so much. From the first day when we were wandering throughout the Castle, walking up every flight of stairs we came across because we knew it was at the top somewhere. My sandal fell off and Jenell coolly handed it back to me. We all ambled up to INS somehow, and I knew immediately Alex was going to give me trouble (nope, not even a break at the end, dude). We didn't meet Sherly until later, but she and Carol had a quiet intelligence and kindness from which we, as well as every discussion we had, benefitted. We rejoined in Junior Colloquium, where Alina made us all look bad with her super-postmodern sculpture. Karyn was always practical, but made us laugh at the same time (and made me the best pirate flag ever!). I don't think I'll ever forget Sarah interjecting healthy eating tips into her comments ("And it's a great way to stay in shape!"). I know we all wish that Kathy could have stayed an extra semester, and that every person originally at the table could have graduated with us. Except Megan. I guess she's pretty cool, though, for a chemist. The academic and intellectual rewards of Honors speak for themselves, but there are no words that can accurately summarize my experiences here. What will remain with me are the memories we made together, and for that I am glad we had the biggest class to make them with.

-Erin Daley, '09



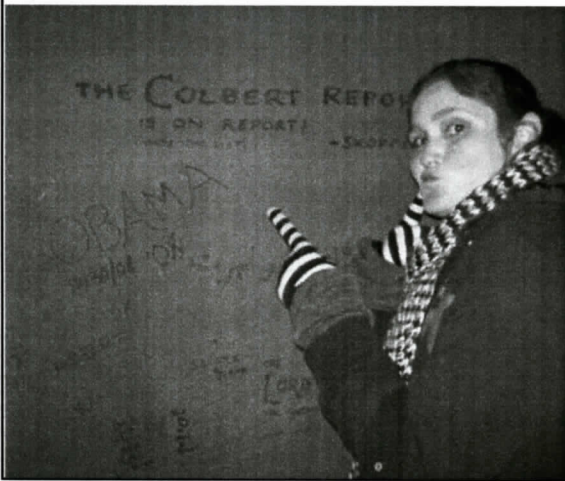
I cannot believe that four years have passed already. People told me that they would fly by, but I didn't believe until I saw it happen. Now, I get to look back at my time here and reflect on all the choices I have made—so far, I have no regrets. My time here at CNR has been a wonderful journey, which has been enhanced by my time in the Honors Program. The first time I met my Honors cohort in HON (INS) 101 was exciting, and little did I know that my relationship with those young women would grow, as I grew. I remember when I first applied; I was initially nervous because I thought that the classes would be harder and require more. Imagine my surprise when I found out the classes were not harder, just different. Whether we were reading *Frankenstein* and later hosting our own private movie night featuring the movie, going to see *Chicago* and *The Color Purple* on Broadway, sitting with the President of the college and discussing a book while enjoying a lovely dinner and a relaxing, sophisticated environment, or even sitting at the table debating about which book we were going to pick for the next Honors freshwomen, we did it together and had a wonderful, memorable time doing it. I will miss the classes, the Professors, advisor(s) and my classmates. I will miss the Honors Program and all the experiences that it has allowed me to have.

-Alexandria Bignall, '09



Alex Bugnall (center) gets a little closer to Danielle Lombard (left) and Kerry Deas (right).

Four years ago, I joined the Honors Program, and I can honestly say that I never saw myself as a graduating Senior. Not that I expected myself to drop out or to quit the Honors Program, but I couldn't see myself as I am today; weeks away from graduating, slightly terrified and excited to be starting something new. My experiences as an Honors student have prepared me in ways that I hadn't expected. I found confidence and articulation through the classes, as well as a



new way of looking at the world. The Honors Program offered more than just classmates, but close friends that I will be very sad to leave. We have spent so much time growing, learning and occasionally fighting with each other that it feels like I'm leaving a part of my family behind here. I will always carry these memories and experiences with me, and I know now that because of these classes and these women I have become who I am today. Good luck to the Honors Seniors, and thank you for everything.

-Megan Showell, '09

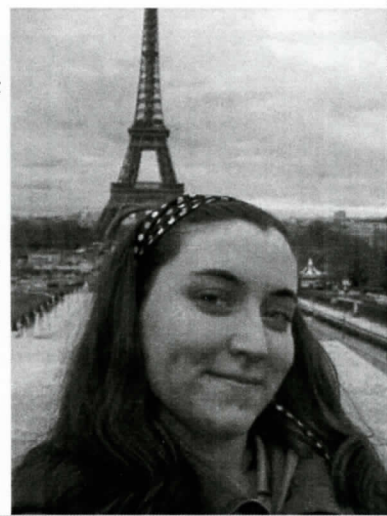


Four years in the Honors Program at The College of New Rochelle brings back fond memories to me. Starting out, I remember myself as a shy, introverted teenager who felt like a fish out of water. The Honors classes I took as a freshman enabled me to find a group of friends who were also in a similar situation as me. Climbing up the tiny stairs to the Honors classroom offered an assurance that I would be with OUR Honors group – the class of 2009. Over the years we have shared many Honors experiences with each other, each one bringing us closer to one another. When I look back at my years at CNR, I always think of our group with a smile on my face. Honors seminars have enabled me to find myself. Right from the beginning, Honors classes were a challenge for me. All the professors forced me to think out of my comfort zone. Dr. Bass' "Pop Culture" class taught me to look at hip hop and other pop culture images with a new eye, while Dr. Kra-

man's "Self and Other" class gave me the opportunity to explore Hinduism. Furthermore, Dr. Petrullo's "Genetics and Identity" placed the familiar scientific concepts in relation to identity, giving new meanings to the science of Genetics. Thus, Honors seminars have always been varied and thought-provoking. These experiences have tremendously contributed to who I am and how much I have grown in the past four years. As a senior, I am ready to face the world, knowing that each one of us is unique and that we can bring our own merits to the world. Congratulations guys!!! We made it!!! Thank you for making college life all the more enjoyable!

-Carol Mathew, '09

Wow! I can not believe that four years at CNR and with the Honors Program have gone by already! I'm really glad that I have been a part of the Honors Program because it forced me to become more driven and focused on getting things done on time since I had to manage work and projects from two other different departments. Also, it allowed me to be freer and open with class discussions since I was with a smaller group than in most other classes, as well as having the chance to work with others from a wide selection of disciplines and backgrounds. The many opportunities that the Honors Program offers (such as trips to Broadway shows, participating in Honors Conference Day and submitting articles and artwork to Femmes) allowed me, a commuter student, to still participate in events on and off campus and feel like a part of the college community. The friendships I have made in the Honors Program, students and professors alike, have been an influence on the woman I am today, and for that alone I am glad I joined the Honors Program as a freshman. I will most definitely miss everything, and everyone, Honors! Good luck and best of wishes to the Honors Class of 2009 - ♥ya! -Karyn Mooney, '09



Four years have passed and I can undoubtedly say that I have enjoyed every single day of my college experience. The College of New Rochelle was a perfect place for me, especially because my freshmen year here at CNR was my first year in the United States. As a part of exploring and learning new things, I enrolled in the Honors Program along with other courses for my major. I still remember how clueless I was in my freshmen year Honors class, but that was just a stepping-stone. As time passed, I started realizing how I have changed into an independent, confident woman who knows what she is doing. Honors made me believe that to get a complete taste of an enriched college experience it is important to take a variety of inter-disciplinary classes. Who would imagine a biology major taking a yearlong class on postmodernism or even a semester long class, "Working Class Internationalism." I am glad I did all of that because these were the memories that have shaped me into who I am today. I can with confidence say that Honors has helped me grow as an intellectual and as a whole person. Best wishes to the Honors freshmen class. Enjoy this journey to the fullest!!!



-Sherly Mathew, '09

I transferred to CNR in my sophomore year and I was able to enter the Honors Program that spring semester. Truthfully, I didn't know much about the Honors Program but I thought it would be an interesting experience that could help ease the stress of science courses. I found the Honors Program to be an enlightening experience; I was able to develop my own time-line on the history of education for African-Americans in one of my honors courses. In addition, I was able to go to entertaining events such as the *West Side Story* performance on Broadway. Furthermore, I began to learn more about myself and my commitment to making a difference in the world in my colloquium project, "War Crimes Against Women: Terroristic Disasters. I



realized that vital issues or immoral crimes that affect women are often ignored by the media and governments; therefore, it takes a person gathering the courage to research a controversial topic to realize that changes need to be made in the present international system that will make war crimes against women crimes that can be harshly punished by the law. This colloquium class strengthened my feminist drive that women's experiences, issues, and ideas should be valued in society so that women will have rights that economically, socially, politically, socially, sexually, and intellectually make them equal to men in society.

-Natasha Reid, '09



Having been a part of the Honor's Program over the last four years here at the College of New Rochelle has been one of the primary factors that made my experience as a college student enriching, intriguing, and enjoyable. It was through Honors that I've had the chance to be a part of seminars from a wide variety of studies; from courses such as "Greek Tragedy" that submerged me into the ancient world of Greek culture to "Genetics and Identity," where I explored how one's genetic make-up can and does influence self identity. It was being an Honor's student that pushed me to become a leader and a thinker, self-confident through the numerous activities, conferences, and opportunities that were part of the Honor's experience. Not to mention, as an Honor's student I have had the privilege to meet many extraordinary individuals and have made life long friendships along the way. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg of how important the Honors Program has been to me throughout my college years. Being a member of the Honor's Program has helped me develop into the intelligent, creative, insightful young woman that I am today and I have high hopes of incorporating all of the great qualities I've acquired from the Honors Program into all of my future endeavors and in all aspects of my life. -Sarah Hnath, '09

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To the
best class
ever! 2009!
Good luck!
Alexandra
Byrall

Love You all!
Girls of '09!
Love,
Carol

We just
want to let
you know you guys
are the best! Good
luck with everything!
We love you guys!
Sarah

Remember that one time...?
♥ Jonell

Why did no one
take the middle?
FINE! I'll remember
you'll back in Bohemia!
♥ Erin Do Good!
IN LIFE

It's been a blast!
Best of Luck to
the class best Honors
PKayn

Thanks for all
the memories!
Hagan
Shawell

Thanks guys
for all the good
time!! Good
luck to ya'll!
Sherly

Good
Luck :)
Alma